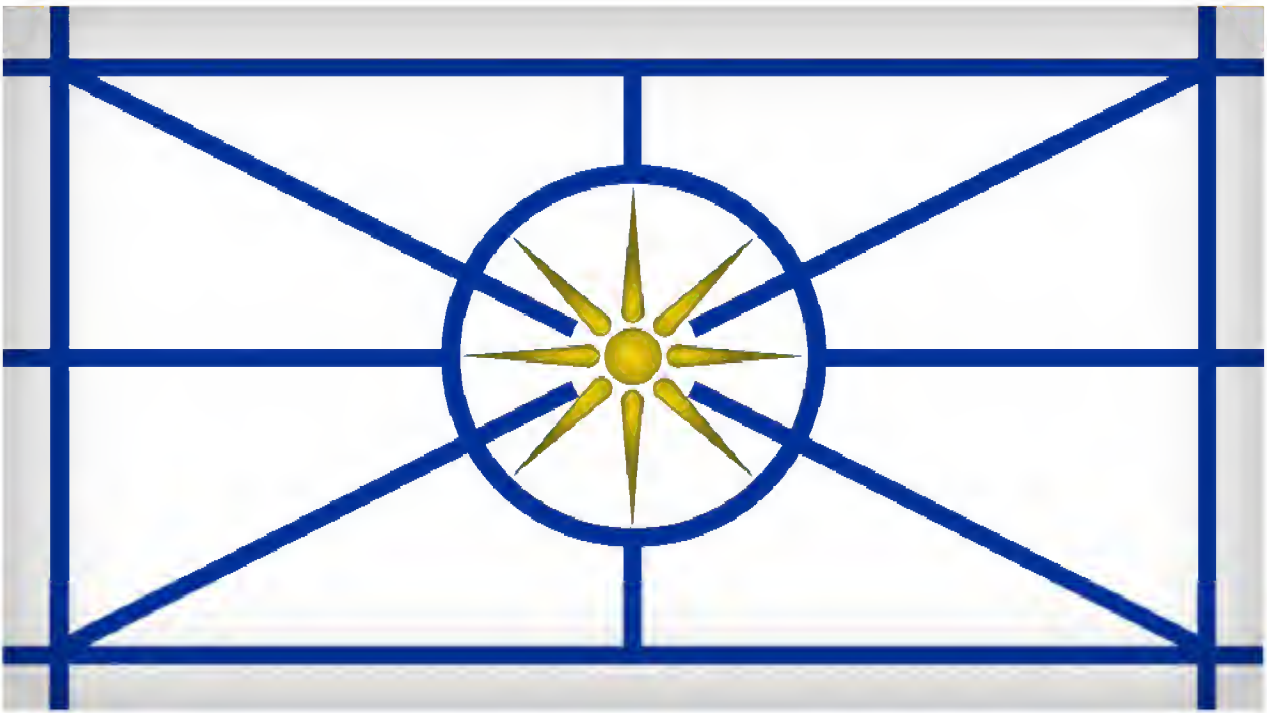


Basil Chulev

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The *Vlachs* ("*Wallachians*" or "*Lyachi*") – Europe's forcibly Latinized population, e.g. *Franks, Germans, Iberians, Lombardians, Romanians, Aromanians*, etc.



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**Introduction** - The phenomenon of Latinization needs to be understood in relation with the past and actual reality of the western-fabricated historiography. It is a sum of false appearances and misleading conceptions that were installed during the past centuries by institutions like the church and western monarchies. Its basic concept is the world domination, but the mode of its implementation is very similar, if not the same, to the gamble-game practiced by the street cheats called '*Three Card Monte*', only on a much larger scale. Namely, the Latinization is yet another bogus shift process, meant to swindle as much as possible of the world population to make them believe in something that never existed. This is done with purpose to confuse the people, make them easily manipulable, and turn them against each other in order to obtain profit and power to rule. It is a long assimilation process, which makes the people (and their cultures) conform to the ruling class ideas and the thirst for profits of the western world, its monarchies, and the Latin (catholic) church.

This '*Three Card Monte*' style shifting was implemented by mixing-up the historical chronology and bringing into disorder different historical realities, thus confusing the way of perception by introducing different politically-invented ethnic terms. One such a pseudo-term is the word "*Vlach*", highly manipulable and similar to the related artificial categories as "*Germanic*", "*Hellenic*",

“Byzantine”, “Slavic”, “Celtic”, etc. – all of which are modern pseudo-ethnic fraudulent deceptions. For example, the term “Byzantine/Byzantium” that tends to describe the Eastern Roman/Romeian empire, was invented by the German historian Hieronimus Wolf and inserted more than 100 years after the actual fall of the Romeian capital and holy see Constantinopolitana Nova Roma (i.e. *Constantinople*). Needless to say that the Eastern Romeian empire in its millennium long history never was in fact “Byzantium”, nor the Romeian people ever called themselves “Byzantines”. This post-factum term was absolutely unknown in their time, and like the other politically-biased terms it has no historical background other than the manipulative one.

Likewise, for the “Latin” in the dictionary we can read: “*the language of ancient Rome and its empire, widely used historically as a language of scholarship and administration.*” So, a language of ‘scholarship and administration’, but not of the people, even much less of the *Dačian* people on the southern slopes of Carpathian mountains, later designated as “*Vlachs*”, which were light years away from Rome.

Thus, in medieval Croatian documents written in Latin, the term “*Vlach*” is translated as ‘*Latinus*’, i.e. “Latin.” The people from Poland call Italy “*Wollochia*” and the people “*Wlochy*”, because most of Italy is actually an assembly of Latinized non-Roman regions and populations (thus ‘*Vlachs*’). As follows: Venetia (*Etruscan-Venetic* region)<sup>1</sup> and Lombardia (i.e. “*The land of the Longobardi*”)<sup>2</sup> were areas populated by the people of Macedonic descent<sup>3</sup>; ‘*Magna Graecia*’ - the ancient “*Greek*” cities in southern Italy founded from c. 750 BCE onward by colonists from Euboea, Sparta, and elsewhere in Peloponnesus; Toscana region was populated by *Etruscans*, again settlers from Aegean; Sardinia after genetic research was proved to be populated by people originated from Macedonian peninsula too... Not to mention the Barbarian<sup>2</sup> invasions in 4th-5th century that brought to the fall of Rome and separation of the Roman empire into many independent kingdoms and principalities. Those were the fragmented ethnicities of Italy, which were Latinized in the same way like *Romania* (ex-*Wallachia*), *France* (ex-*Gaul*), *Spain* and *Portugal* (ex-*Iberia*), etc. Countries and people that were once aboriginal non-latin lands, during the centuries of slavery and Roman tyranny were more or less forcibly Latinized. Nevertheless, for confirmation of their non-Latin past it’s enough to look at the local place names. The same is true for the greater part of the Vlach “*Germania*” and “*Austria*” (i.e. *Oste-reich* - the ‘east(ern) kingdom’)<sup>4</sup>, which are also Latinized-Germanized ex-Venetic and Macedonic lands: ex-*Carantania*, *Great Moravia*, *Pomerania*, *Sclavania*, etc.

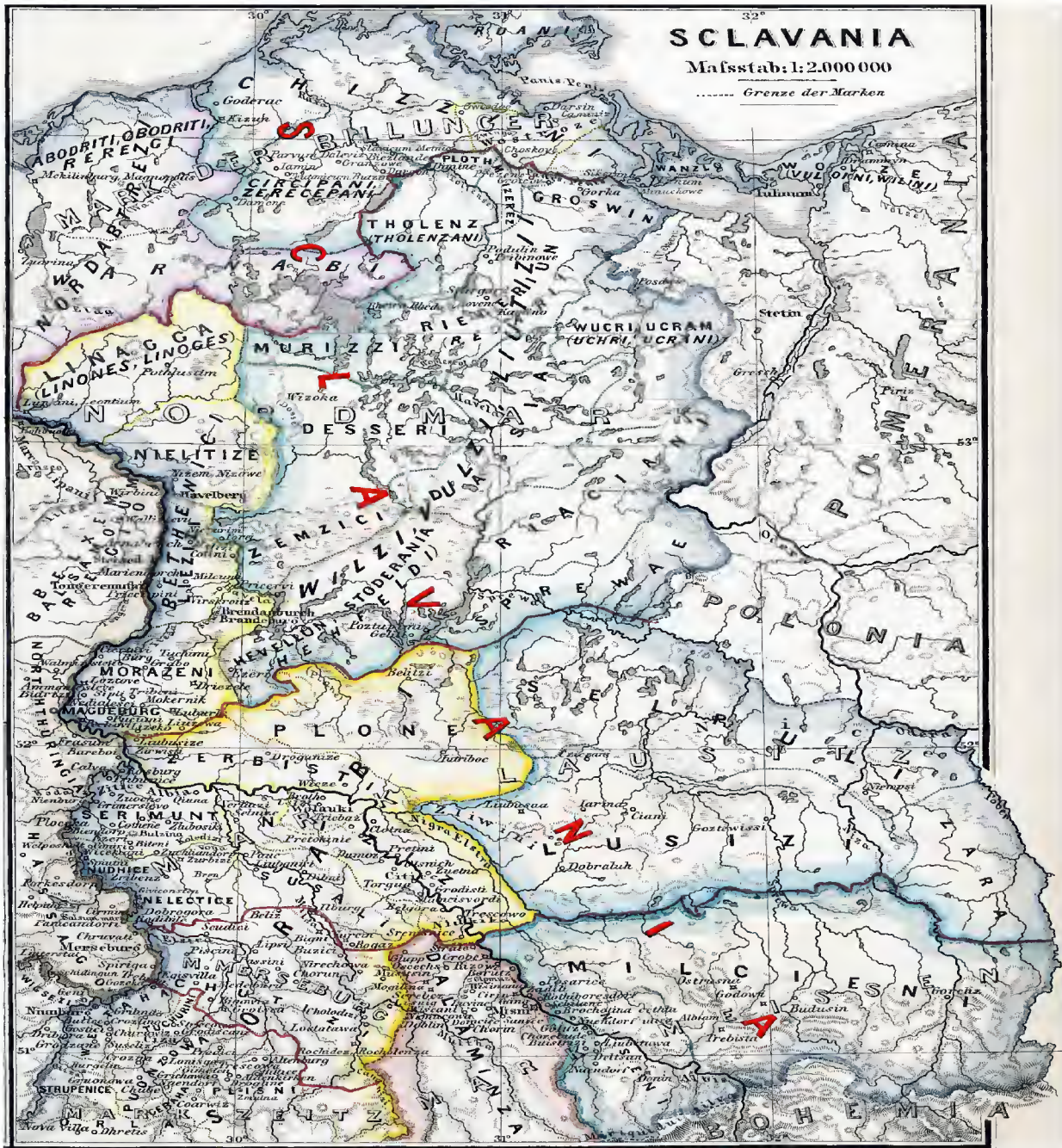
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<sup>1</sup> *Veneti*, *Winden*, germ. *Wenden*, lat. *Venedi*; also “*Wendish*” (so called *Slo-Veneti*) in the Alps; another neo-Latin term denoting non-Italic *Illyro-Macedonic* population in the regions of *Lombardia* and homonymous *Veneto/Venetia*. First mentioned by Homer as *Enetoi* from Macedonia.

<sup>2</sup> From the late Latin ‘*Langobardus*’ - ‘the long beards’; english: ‘*Lombardian*’, comparable to ‘*Barbarian*’ - ‘barbed-Aryan’, from Italian ‘*barba*’ - beard.

<sup>3</sup> see *Eneti/Enetoi* and *Tyrseni* or *Tyrsenoi*, according to ancient authors the Aegean ancestors of the Veneti and Etruscans (from Latin: *et truscan* - ‘a truscan’, corrupted of *Tyrsen*)

<sup>4</sup> ‘out of the hat’ country, “*Austria*”, meaning ‘eastern-kingdom’ (from German ‘*osten-reich*’) is another bogus-term meant to erase the previous original names of the Great Moravia, Carantania, Venetia, etc. - all of which were originally Macedonic nations before their fall under the Holy Roman Empire, created by Vatican and Franks (another non-ethnicity term!) of Charles the Great (Charlemagne).



Vlachs (also spelled Vlah; in medieval Latin *Blachus*<sup>5</sup>) call themselves *Roumanș*, *Armănș* and/or *Rămănș*, which can be translated as “the Roman nation”, but without the modern connotations of “nation”.<sup>6</sup> Among them there is also an internal social subdivision, according to

<sup>5</sup> note the B/V transition, because in Cyrillic “B” is pronounced as Latin “V”. Example: *Byzantia* is *Vyzantia* in plain Macedonian. Thus *Blachus* is actually *Vlach(us)*.

<sup>6</sup> Even in English, the adjective ‘*Romaic*’ (analog to other bogus terms like “*Slavic*” or “*Hellenic*”) has occasionally been used to refer to modern Vlachs and their language. What is important to note, though, is that the ‘*Romaic*’ community was not ethnically “Vlach” nor “Roman”, it was not

different professions inside of their communities which are preserved even today through their surnames. Among these the best-known representatives are the *Aurari* (goldsmiths), the *Kalderaš* (coppersmiths), the *Lovara* (horse traders), the *Ursari* (bear leaders), the *Linguari* (spoon makers), etc.

Beside their most known name the Vlachs are also known by other Macedonic terms: “*Tsintsari*”, again a clearly pejorative term related to their way of talking, actually corrupted onomatopoeia of the phrase “*ci faci*” – thus ‘*cincifaci*’ - ‘what are you doing?’; in Aegean Macedonia they are also known as “*Koutso-Vlachs*” (‘lame-Vlachs’) and “*Megleno-Aromanians*” (because they live mainly in Meglensko region); in Republic of Macedonia as “*Vlasi*”, “*Aromani*”, “*Armano-Macedonians*” and “*Macedo-Aromani*”; Turks called them simply “*Čobani*” (meaning “pastoralists” in Turkish); in Matia and Dalmatia Venetians called them “*Morlaks*” (or “*Morlachs/Mavrovlachi*” - ‘Black-Lyachs’); in western parts of today Bosnia, Croatia and Istria they’re also called “*Ćići*” (a diminutive of Serbo-Croatian “*Čiribiri*”, another pejorative term for Vlachs (comparable to Macedonic “*Tsintsari*”). It is claimed that terms *Ćići* and *Čiribiri* are not of the same origin. Apparently the name *Ćići* came from saying ‘*Chi-Chi*’, and *Čiribiri* of “*Čiri-biri*”, which means ‘hold firm’. These were the *Morlachs* from Mt. Velebit which by the mid-15th century led by St. Ivan VII Frankopan, settled on the island of Krk. “*Vlach*” it also occurs in Hungarian as “*Olasz*”, in Polish as “*Łiachi*”, in Slovenian as “*Laški*”, in Russian as “*Volokh*”, in Yiddish as “*Walach*”, in French as “*Valaques*”, etc.

Estimates of the number of Vlachs and of Aromanian speakers vary widely. The only reliable official figures for those declaring Vlach ethnic affiliation comes from the Republic of Macedonia (2002) - 9,695, with 6,884 declaring Vlach their mother tongue. Estimates for Albania (2011) are 8,266 individuals (the real number is much higher), with 3,848 claiming Aromanian as their mother tongue; in Bulgaria (2011) - 3,684 ethnic Vlachs (again the real number is highly underestimated); estimates for Romania vary between 30,000 and 100,000 (although Romanians claim that the Vlachs are actually Romanians!); and the estimates for Greece vary even more (due to flagrant refusal of the racist Greek government to recognize any ethnic minorities on its territory). Worth mentioning is the fact that the only country that fully recognizes their distinctive minority and language is Republic of Macedonia, where the Vlachs have schools and TV Emissions in their language, and the Aromanesque community is even politically represented in the parliament.

By definition Vlachs are “Romance-language speakers who live south of the Danube” in what are now Slovenia, Serbia, Croatia, Montenegro, southern Albania, Aegean Macedonia in northern Greece, Republic of Macedonia, and southwestern Bulgaria. The majority of Vlachs speak *Aromanian*, but inhabitants of a few villages on both sides of the border between Greece and southeastern Macedonia speak *Megleno-Aromanian* and call themselves *Vla*’ (plural *Vlaš*). There is also a Vlach diaspora in other European countries, especially Romania, as well as in North America and Australia. Modern Romanian scholars (cf. as a classic: Capidan 1937; Papahagi 1932) and also the members of the Aromanian diaspora in the Boston area in the USA, Germany and

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ethnically based at all. The Romaic proto-nation was associated with a definite territory, that of the Ottoman empire (but the Orthodox Christians outside the empire were not called “*Romans*”), it had a common religion and a common higher culture, and it had common administrative institutions in the Roman *Millet* (or *Rumelia*). Both Ecclesiastic Septuagint and Church Macedonic were used as sacred languages, and the Septuagint-speaking clergy did not try to hinder the use of Church Macedonic before the creation of the new nations in 19th century (Detrez 2008, 160).

France, classify the Albanian Aromanians among the Macedo-Aromanian group or “*Southern-Danube Romance*” culture. Simply summarized, they search for the basis of their cultural concept in the linguistic evidence that the Aromanian language is a Romanian dialect.

And, for comparison to these Latinized-submissive groups, there are the portions of Macedonian and Latinized-Macedonian population (i.e. Vlachs) who later, under the Ottoman Turks occupation, were further Islamized and renamed into: “*Torbeši*”, “*Babuši*”, “*Gorani*”, “*Pomaci*”, “*Poturci*”, “*Shqipetari*” or “*Shiptari*” (today “*Albanians*”), etc.

In all Macedonic languages the plural word for *Vlach* is “*Vlasi*”, which is by some scholars associated with *Veles* - a shaggy-demonic demiurge pagan deity, god of the woods and the cattle, corresponding to the Egyptian *Ptah* and Danaan *Hefest* (Latin: *Hephaestus*). The very name of the medieval pagan deity *Veles*, etymologically ‘*V’lesse*’, actually means “in the woods”.

Polish terms “*Wollochia/Wlochy*” (in old Polish scripts “*Liachi*” or “*Lechi*”; Hungarian-Latin “*Blacus*”) as well as “*Vlach*” actually originated from the vernacular Macedonic “*Lyachi*”, which generally means ‘*incapable*’, ‘*unable*’ or even ‘*retarded*’, and it is a disrespectful word for the Latinized Macedonic people, that were converted by force, bribe, or other means. The root of the word is to be found in the Macedonic adjective word “*Lek*” or “*Lak*” – light, weightless (transitive ‘*easy-minded*’), denoting their treacherous conversion and submission to the Romans. As a result of this pejorative connotation, it became a norm (though nowadays more or less abandoned) to write the initial letter of name “*Vlach*” in lower-case – *vlah* instead of *Vlah*, in order to emphasize that this community was not based by any means on ethnic/national identity, but on common interest (sheep herding) and a distinctive, nomadic/semi-nomadic and pastoral way of living. Thus, in Macedonian peninsula and wider central European region the term ‘*vlah*’ describes a profession and/or a way of life, not ethnicity. The contrived act of transformation of the Vlachs into “ethnicity” and even nation (Romania) in 19th century, was direct outcome of the counterfeit politically-biased western historiography.

Furthermore, in the western parts and northwest of the Macedonian peninsula there is the region where the *Morlachs* i.e. “*Mavrovlachī*” (the ‘Black-vlachs’) dwelled. Known as “*Stari Vlach*” (or ‘*Old Wallachia*’) it’s in the central Alpine region of Matia (today *Albania*)<sup>7</sup>, and the name “*Stari Vlach*” by itself affords sufficient indication that these inaccessible highlands continued to be a stronghold of the Romanized indigenous Macedonic element, during, and long after the Roman occupation. These are the western bordering mountain districts of Macedonia, and the ancient names *Matia* and *Ematia* show us their Macedonic origins from the natives that are of Dessaretian and Lychnid descent (around the lake Ohrid).<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> “Mt. Kovač, Mt. Morlachia - the dwelling highlands of the “*Morlachs*”: (koine: MavpoBlaxoi - Mavro-Vlachs, or ‘*Black Vlachs*’), an etymology noted by the early Dalmatian chronicler, the Presbyter of Dioclea (Douklya), who, after identifying them with the descendants of the Roman Provincials, translates their name into *Nigri Latini* (‘black latins’).” - from Sir Arthur J. Evans “Antiquarian Researches in Illyricum – IIV”, p. 46.

<sup>8</sup> Sir Arthur J. Evans “Antiquarian Researches in Illyricum – IIV”, pp. 24, 37, 38.



Walache. Bulgare.

The Vlachs from Macedonia and Wallachia (today Romania)<sup>9</sup> went even further with their herding migrations. Thus, in Serbia, Bosnia, Croatia and Slovenia even today we have their settlements. In Bosnia there's a village *Vlaška*; in Serbia the village of *Vlasi*; in Croatia we have *Vlaška Ves* and *Marina Vlaška* on the island of Brač; in Slovenia there are places of *Laški Rovt*, *Laško*, *Laška Seč* (a mountain), etc. In Slovenia the term "*Laški*" (which means both "Latin" and/or "Italian") as an adjective is widely used to describe a myriad of things from everyday life. There's a wine "*Laški*

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<sup>9</sup> Walachia, the principality of Moldavia, was founded in 1359 and included Bukovina and Bessarabia.



*Rizling*<sup>10</sup>, a type of beans called “*Laški fižol*”, and even one kind of local frog is named ‘*Laška žaba*’ (i.e. “*Vlach frog*”).



*pisana žaba (4,5–7 cm)*



*laška žaba (5,5–7,5 cm)*

Venetian sources sometimes used the term ‘*uskok*’ as a synonym for the Vlachs: in 1599, Nicola Dandolo, the Venetian governor of *Dalmatia* and the commander of the fleet, informed the Senate of Venice that “*almost all uskoks are Turkish subjects of Morlak ethnicity,*” neglecting the fact that these Dalmatian “*Morlaks*” were not a part of any particular ethnic or national community and were happy to identify themselves with the pre-national multiethnic Orthodox Christian community.

But, lets go back to the question regarding their origin - who are these people nicknamed “*Lyachs/Vlachs*” or “*Wallachians*”? Who were they before being Latinized and renamed into “*Vlachs*” and later nationalized as “*Romanians*”, “*Albanians*”, etc.?

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<sup>10</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Welschriesling>

## Macedonic origin of the ‘Vlachs’

The issue of the origin and identity of the ‘Vlachs’ still continues to raise controversies in European different politically-biased historiographies. But, some indubitable traces seem to prove that the origin of the *Vlach* people was actually in the southern part of the Macedonian peninsula, from the indigenous Romanized Macedonic population living in the highlands of the southern Balkans. According to many sources from the ancient historiography, it seems that different groups of Macedonic shepherds from the southern parts of Macedonian peninsula survived the historical troubles of the Roman invasion of Macedonia in the 2nd century BCE. But, they were gradually “Romanized” during the Roman occupation. Geographically and culturally, the most of these people moved over the extensive Macedonian peninsula and Lower Danube area in different epochs and under different historical conditions. Nevertheless, their basically Macedonic origin is one of the reasons why the ethnic image in different parts of this region of Europe is so extremely diverse and specific, and why the people here live in ethnic symbiosis.<sup>11</sup>

Erodot (lat. *Herodotus*), the “father of historical writing” visited Dačia around 480 BCE and he named the people there as “*Getae*”. According to Erodot and other ancient authors, the inhabitants of later Roman province of *Dacia* comprised of four or five tribes and they built their tribal culture under Macedonic and Gaulic influence. According to other historical sources, the oldest tribes in these regions were: *Triballi*, *Moesians*, *Pikenze*, *Trikornenze* and *Timahi*. Still, so far the conventional science has not been able to prove which of those belonged to the Gauls, Dačians, or possibly to Macedonians. But their ethnonyms indubitably show their Macedonic origin. Namely, “*Triballi*” (i.e. ‘*Three-polians*’)<sup>12</sup> and “*Trikornenze*” (i.e. ‘*Three-corners*’) derived their names from the old Latin-Macedonic name for the Macedonian peninsula - *Ilirsko Tropole* (*Illyrian Tripole* or *Tropole*)<sup>13</sup>, denoting the central strategic position of the Macedonian peninsula as the crossroad between the three neighboring regions - Asia Minor, Northeastern and Northwestern Europe. “*Moesians*” is yet another derivative from a Macedonic term - “*Mezza*” (“*Meša*” in plain Macedonian) meaning “*mixing*” or “*where it changes*”. Even a Mule, i.e. the offspring of a donkey and a horse is called “*Mazga*” in plain Macedonian. These “*Getae*” lived in strong rock-fortresses, their society was organized in clans with military-social character, and they practiced agriculture and animal breeding. They were also experienced miners, and they sold their gold, silver, iron and salt to neighboring Macedonians, using Macedonic coins in their commercial affairs.

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<sup>11</sup> This is the most plausible theory and is gaining support among the Vlachs in Macedonian peninsula. One of the representative scholars on this issue is Branislav Stefanovski, who states that “*Arm'n-Macedonians are direct descendants of the Ancient Macedonians*” and that “*their vernacular ancient language is almost completely preserved through Arm'n-Macedonian (Paionian-Pelasgo-Traco-Illyrian Macedonic)*.” See Branislav Stefanovski books: “*Pelasghyi - Limba, Carte, Numa*”, “*Short Descriptive History About The Origin Of The Arm'n-Macedonians (from prehistory to the colonization of Dačia)*”, “*Hyperboreii ši Zamolxismul*”, etc.

<sup>12</sup> Oxford Thesaurus Dictionary gives the following explanation: “*ORIGIN Old French : ‘tribu’, from Latin ‘tribus’ (singular and plural); perhaps related to tri- ‘three’ and referring to the three divisions of the early people of Rome (?)*.”

<sup>13</sup> see Jovan Dragašević “*Ilirsko Tropolje: Balkansko poluostrvo. Vojno-Politička Studija*” (“*Illyrian Tripolye: Balkan Peninsula. Military.Political Study*”). Note: “*Tripole*” in plain Macedonian means “*Three-fields*”; also Macedonic places and cities names: *Lazaropole*, *Moskopole*, *Galipole*, *Konstantinopole (Constantinople)*, etc.

When in AD 107 emperor Trajan annexed this barbarous region to the Roman empire, the country, exhausted by six years of obstinate warfare, was little more than a desert. Roman legions, full of bloodthirsty revenge, because of the great loss in human resources on the Roman side too, almost completely exterminated the entire population of Dacia. The unfortunate country became one burning bloody slaughter. Trajan's column in the Roman forum is one of the best historical evidence of the complete destruction of ancient Dacia. To repopulate it, the emperor transported to it, as Eutropius (VIII, 6) tells us, multitudes of colonists "*ex toto urbe Romano!*" from all the neighboring territories of Rome. The population of this country was even more mixed in the second century AD than it is today, where all the races of Europe are still bickering and battling with one another. Besides the remnants (if any) of the ancient Dacians, were found here Macedonians and Pannonians, Gauls, Carians, and Asiatics, people from Edessa and further from Asia Minor, and still others besides, all of whom continued to practice the languages and religions of their native countries. That's one of the reasons why there's no written records of these different groups, as they were utterly governed and administrated by the Roman rulers.

Until the fall of the western Roman Empire in the 5th century, and following the strategic Roman retreat from the region on the northern banks of Danube, it was known by the name *Dacia Traiana* (part of later Transylvania and Oltenia). After AD 271 (when emperor Aurelian withdrew his legions and colonuses (settlers) from those territories), the future "*Vlachs*" gradually settled in the abandoned by Romans lands. Groups that migrated from the south towards north arrived first to the Dobruja region and than to the Munthenian area<sup>14</sup>. Their migration toward north lasted for several decades, or even a century or two, until the first flocks of opposite-migrating people from Asia appeared from the northeast. Six hundred dark years followed in this era. However, there are no buildings or other traces of these "*Proto-Vlachs*" to be found, nor do we have any documents or other data proving their early existence. Not only did the ancient Dacia drop out of history in AD 271<sup>15</sup>, but the region returned to history (and literacy) only with the introduction of the Cyrillic alphabet. It is certain, however, that Transylvania was subject to the rule of the invading Goths until the beginning of the 5th century. As we can see, Aurelian let them conquer Dacia in 271.

Then the Huns conquered Transylvania with their devastating attacks, but after the collapse of their empire the area became the property of the *Gepids*, and later of the *Longobards*. In the second half of the 6th century Dacia was conquered by the *Avars*. Their empire existed until the end of the 8th century AD.

An old Romanian anonymous chronicle tells us that the first conquest of the Vlachs came from the southern part of the Danube through Oltenia under the reign of the Basarab Dynasty (Note: the founder of this dynasty, Basarab, was born at the end of the 13th century). The name of "*Vlachs*" actually appears for the first time in 976, in chronicler John Skilitzes writings. Also, the name '*Vlachs*' (or *Wallachians*) was clearly the name given by other Macedonic people to those latinized parts of their own population in Southern, Central and Eastern Europe. The origin of the name is related to Macedonic etymology: same origin leads to the words "*Welsh*" and "*Walloon*" in other

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<sup>14</sup> Area between the Carpathian mountain range and the Lower Danube.

<sup>15</sup> As it happens, only one other place in the Roman empire dropped out of history in quite the same way was Britain. The withdrawal of Roman forces in AD 410 dropped Britain into a void very similar to that of Dacia.

parts of Europe for local populations considered *Romance*<sup>16</sup> (ex. Prince Charles of Wales).

In the western dictionaries under “*Vlach*” we read: “a member of the indigenous population of Romania and Moldavia, claiming descent from the inhabitants of the Roman province of Dacia.” Further it says: “origin from a Macedonic<sup>17</sup> word meaning ‘foreigner’<sup>18</sup>, (and/or) from a Germanic word related to Old English *Wælic* (see *Welsh*<sup>19</sup>)” for the Gaul/Celtic tribe known as “*Volcae*”. Which is by the way too generic and clueless as explanation, since the “*Volk*” (*Folk*) is simply “people” in plain German.<sup>20</sup> The so-called ‘*Germanic*’ (from Latin “*Germanus*”<sup>21</sup>) etymology can be discarded immediately, as bogus neo-Latin invention itself, and not related in any way to any of the Central-European peoples or regions whatsoever, and totally foreign to the vocabulary of the population which tries to describe (comparable to the aboriginal “*Indians*” of America, which appeared not to be from India). But, unlike the “*Vlachs*” or “*Romanians*” (the supposed “descendants of the *Dačians*”<sup>22</sup>), the so-called “*Germans*” naturally call themselves “*Deutsch*”, same as their closest neighbors further north which are “*Dutch*” [də-čh], both of which are terms that clearly resemble their ancestral ethnonym - “*Dačian*” [də-čhi-an]. It appears that the so-called “*Germans*” have more in common with the nearby ex-Roman province of ‘*Dačia*’ (later Wallachia and today Romania) than the people from today Romania who claim this same descent. And by cultural and linguistic parameters seem that the “*Deutsch*” and “*Dutch*” people are the true Latinized descendants of the ancient ‘*Dačians*’. Today modern “*Romanians*” don’t speak any ‘*Dačian*’ language, and their official language is “*Roumanian*”, one of the heavily corrupted catholic-church Latin idioms or ‘*Romance*’ languages.<sup>23</sup> However, about the presumed “*Dačian*” language there’s no proof left, nor any preserved text exists. But, such basic root words as the

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<sup>16</sup> the languages evolved from Latinized group of Indo-European languages, principally: Albanian, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, Catalan, Occitan, Romansh, Romanian and Aromanian.

<sup>17</sup> I use the word ‘Macedonic’ instead of “*Slavic*” for good reason, as the word and the concept of the second is modern invention that was unknown to the ancient populations and is empirically wrong. Its use perpetuates misleading assumptions, which this paper tries to avoid altogether.

<sup>18</sup> Word “*Vlach*” doesn’t mean ‘foreigner’ in Macedonian nor in any other language. Its base ‘*lyach*’ [liāh] in plain Macedonic means ‘incapable’ or ‘incompetent’. See also “*Lyape*.”

<sup>19</sup> “*Welsh*”, from Old Germanic “*Valš*” (pronounced ‘*falš*’); from Latin “*falsum*” - false, incorrect, not according with truth or fact.

<sup>20</sup> [http://www.orbilat.com/General\\_Survey/Terms--Wallachians\\_Walloons\\_Welschen\\_etc.html](http://www.orbilat.com/General_Survey/Terms--Wallachians_Walloons_Welschen_etc.html)

<sup>21</sup> Adjective, archaic [postpositive] (of a sibling) having the same parents : *my brothers-german*; Origin: Middle English : from Old French *germain*, from Latin *germanus* - ‘*genuine*,’ of the same parents’; also “*Herman*” - ‘brother’ in modern Spanish. Also ‘*neighbor*’; compare to Old Macedonic and Old Irish ‘*gair*’ - neighbor. Places: villages *German* in Aegean Macedonia and Republic of Macedonia; also personal names: *German*, *Gerro*, *Gari*, etc.

<sup>22</sup> *Dačia* [dutcha], an ancient country in southeastern Europe, more precisely in northwestern part of what was ‘*Wallachia*’ (i.e. “The land of *Vlachs*”) until 18th century, today known as Romania. Because of its rich gold mines it was invaded and pillaged by Trajan in AD 106, after what it became province of the Roman empire.

<sup>23</sup> *Romance* - the group of Indo-European languages descended from Latin, principally: Albanian, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, Catalan, Occitan, Aromanian, Romanian and Romansh.

Macedonic 'Da' (or German-corrupted 'Yā') - yes, leave no doubt about the distant but true origin of today Latinized "Romanians" and "Germans".<sup>24</sup>



Above: a map that shows the separation of the church (the great schism of 1054) and the distributions of Vlachs (*Valaques*) across the Macedonian peninsula in the 11th century

Western-Roman and Eastern-Romeian, Bulgar, Macedonic and other historical sources mention various 'Vlach' elements which surfaced from the chaotic medieval situation in Macedonia. Following the Roman, Gaul, Anti/Veneti, Geti/Gothi, Hun, and Avar/Magyar/Bulgar invasions, and their more or less temporary settlements, the bulk of the Proto-Vlach ancient Macedonic shepherds interacted with the different foreign elements and gradually shaped into separate social group. This prevalently social group of originally Macedonic people began to be marked as "ethnicity" by the conventional historiography in the 12-13 centuries, and became yet another post-factum genealogical construct, with relativized historical background. For example, when the

<sup>24</sup> Needles to say that the region of Dačia was never conquered by Macedonians, so, the Macedonic words in today Romanian are not imported nor imposed (like Latin) by force. They are just natural remains from the original Macedonic idiom spoken by these people in the most ancient times.

second “Bulgar” kingdom broke away from Wallachia in 1186 - it wasn’t “Bulgar” at all - the revolt was led by the Asen brothers, who were Vlachs themselves. John Asen I styled himself, in Latin: “*imperator omnium Bulgarorum et Blacorum*,” translated in plain English: ‘*the emperor omnifarious, Vulgars and Vlachs*’. Nevertheless, even though Latinized, they did not reveal any recognizable characteristics that were so typical for the legionaries and citizens of Rome, and did not seem to have any substantial connection to the ancient and disintegrated Roman empire. On contrary - they fought the Romans on every occasion.

In regard to this question it must be mentioned that the medieval East Roman Empire wasn’t an ethnically based state, and the Romeian emperors likewise weren’t properly *Roman*. Nonetheless, they did recover back nearly half of the old West-Roman empire from the Vandals and Goths. What Justinian I the Great<sup>25</sup> was by nationality is a large but little noted part of the story of “Vlachs”. He is supposed to have come from a Macedonian family in Tauresium (today village of Taor) near Skopje, the modern capital of Macedonia. But, following his destiny he learned to speak fluent Latin, and while serving in the Romeian army at Constantinopolitana Nova Roma (i.e. *Constantinople*), through military career he rose to an emperor. What Justinian I the Great was and what he did contain important elements of how the mediaeval world was becoming different from the ancient, and how the later Eastern-Romeian empire was thoroughly different from the old Western-Roman empire. His deeds also contain conclusive elements of how and when the “Vlachs” finally emerged from the original Macedonic and other populations. Namely, it is well known that emperor Justinian I the Great raised the Episcopacy of his birthplace, Tauresium, (today village of Taor near today modern capital of Macedonia, Skopje) to the Archbishopric rank with the name *Justiniana Prima*. What is not so well known is the fact that the Archbishopric of *Justiniana Prima* is the first place where the Latin form of Christianity was introduced. Justinian did this in order to project his influence from Constantinople through Skopje toward west, i.e. heavily influenced by the Romans western parts of Macedonian peninsula and the very Apenninic peninsula with old Rome, which he reconquisted from the barbarians. Thus, with the creation of this powerful holy center in Macedonia he wanted to undermine the growing influence of the remote church in Rome, and possibly to replace it with powerful church-center closer to his dependence and holy see in Constantinople. Consequently he built many important religious centers on the eastern coast of the Adriatic Sea, as Diokleia, Ravena, Salona, and even as far as Tharros on Sardinia. With the old Macedonic stratagem already mentioned above, through this new Latin-preached form of Christianity, Justinian was aiming at the linguistic and religious assimilation of the Italic-speaking and Latinized populations in western parts of his empire, yet this time not from Rome but from Constantinople.

But, Rome remained distant as ever from Constantinopolitana Nova Roma, and the means of communication and transportation in those times represented unsurmountable obstacle even for the powerful emperor as Justinian I. His presumptuous act didn’t turn out to bring the desired results. Nevertheless, it exercised decisive influence on the life of the Romanized Latin-speaking Macedonian population in the 6th century Macedonian peninsula. Justiniana Prima elevated status and privileges where definitely confirmed on the Fifth Universal Synod of the Church, where in AD 553 the instauration of the holy see of Justiniana Prima in Episcopal Skopje city was institutionally proclaimed and affirmed by the highest church instances. This gave the new impetus to Latinized portions of indigenous Macedonic and other Romanized populations across Europe. These Latin-speaking people in, lets say Macedonia - would later became “*Vlach*” people, whose language

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<sup>25</sup> ‘*Peter the Just*’ (lat. *Petro Iustinian*) - Petruš Vaistinitin in plain Macedonian.

would eventually evolve into the Romance language called “*Vlachian*” or “*Aromanian*” south of the Danube, and much later into “*Romanian*” north of the Danube. In Spain “*Vlach*”-Latinized would be the local people whose Latinized Iberian language would eventually evolve into Latin “*Spanish*”, in Gaul into “*French*”, in Cisalpine Gaul into “*Romansh*”, in Epirus and Matia into “*Albanian*”, etc. In short, Justinian I the Great and all these Latinized groups of people across the Macedonian peninsula were still ethnic Macedonians, whether in the modern or the ancient sense, regardless of the fact that they learned the administrative Latin idiom and became Eastern Romeian subjects.

The “*Latin as Esperanto*” idea of Justinian I the Great instead of bringing closer the distant parts of his empire in long term provoked the opposite effect. Macedonic peoples were utterly segregated by the Latin rite, which was not accepted by the majority of the Macedonians. That’s also one of the reasons why different communities around Macedonian peninsula resisted so long the Christianization. Further, the Ecclesiastical division between the Macedonic population formed groups of Latin rite on one side: *Croats, Slovenians, Czechs, Slovaks* and *Polacks* on one side, and Orthodox rite on the other: *Macedonians, Serbs, Bulgars, Moldavians, Romanians, Russians*, etc. This segregation finally became a real frontier with the great church schism in 1054, and is clearly observable even today. The feud that broke between the two churches (of Rome and Constantinople) reflected on the Macedonic population too. People were so disappointed and tormented by this religious conflict that in the 10th century in Macedonia appeared a new Christian movement, the Bogomilism, an early precursor of the Protestantism.

However, the things for Eastern-Romeian empire began to degrade rapidly, and the tide of decline ensued. While Romeian power could’ve still be well projected into Italy in 663 and Pope Martin I (649-654) could still be arrested, brought to Constantinople, and exiled to the Crimea, none of this could be done any longer as the 8th century progressed. Constantinople first lost Ravenna in 733, than it was recaptured, and finally was lost forever in 751. This was the end of Ravenna as a center of Romeian power. Further, the pope Gregory III (731-741) from Rome took the next step into dividing the west from east, by appealing to the Franks. In both 739 and 740 Frank king Charles Martel declined to intervene. The next pope, Stephen III (752-757), however, traveled directly to the court of Charles’ son, Pepin (753-754), and brought him a “golden letter sent by God himself..(!)” pleading for help. Meanwhile, East-Romeian empire was losing territories and possessions in Asia Minor and on the sea too. The first of the Balearic islands fell to Islam invaders in 798, Crete was taken in 823, and Sicily was invaded in 827. The old Roman unity, maintained by East-Romeian empire, and in theory even by the distant Franks, cracked, and then shattered. Islamic seafarers permanently severed Constantinople from any chance of projecting real power to the west or south. This new age of terror is sometimes called “The Second Dark Age”.

On religious plan the decline ensued too, the church schism provoked alienation and deviation of the original credo. Church became an institution that cared only for the self fulfillment, people were meant just as a stock for political and warring purposes. In that situation in Macedonia in 10th century appeared even the Bogomils religious movement, the early precursor of Protestantism. The privileged status of Justiniana Prima was about to change too, following the Mongolian, Hun and others invasions from north. Their impact on this important Archbishopric was disastrous, and the Roman-Rite swept away with Latin-preaching church ceasing without a mark. In AD 602 the holy see of Justiniana Prima retreated from Skopje to Ohrid, where it became known as *Ohrid Archiepiscopacy*. The Archbishopric's role in Skopje was taken over by an orthodox Metropolit, subaltern of the Patriarch who was residing in Ohrid. The Latin was replaced with Sebtuagint Koine

and later by Church Macedonic liturgical language, much later renamed by the conventional modern historiography into “*Old Church Slavonic*.”<sup>26</sup>



Above: Vlachian (*Mavrovlach* or *Morlach*) soldiers from regions of Matia and Dalmatia

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<sup>26</sup> “*Old Church Slavonic, the liturgical language of the Eastern Orthodox Church, is based on Old Macedonian*” from “*Encyclopedia of Indo-European culture*” by J. P. Mallory and Douglas Q. Adams, p. 301.



## The Romanian wannabe-Roman attempt

The 19th century newborn state of Romania added to the historic, politic and diplomatic controversy of the “Vlachs”. The facts of the ancient historical migration and evolution of the Vlachs coming from the south was suddenly opposed in the 20<sup>th</sup> century by the modern Romanian political aspirations. Politically-biased nationalists presented a theory which tries to connect the descendants of the Wallachians directly to the ancient Romans, especially to the Roman conquest in ancient Dacia. This national-romantic imagination became a myth, and gradually became a political propaganda. Influenced by this new theory, historians (even those who previously adopted the documented migration of the south-Macedonic Vlachs) became influenced by this new claim of the modern Romanian-national agenda. Having from now on yet another imposed theory of Vlach/Wallachian origin most of the historians faced this problem as one more of the “*unsolved questions of European history*.” The Romanian politicians as everybody else simply followed the overall 19-20th centuries event of the new nations upheaval, when young nationalists desperately needed historic national myths, and if a young nation does not have such myth one should’ve been created. In 1913, with the publication of the famous book "Prehistoric Dačia" by Nicholas Densusianu, springing from the nationally vigorous imagination of the author, the claim was laid on *Dačians* as people who had developed an advanced prehistoric civilization of *Dačia* (?), then after mixed with Romans, thus posing today Romania as cradle of the entire European civilization... Therefore, even without any real historical evidence, Romanian neoimperialist-wannabes used the myth of “*Dako-Roman-continuity*” as a great incentive for the “reconquest” of those territories which were “*lost by their Dacian and Roman forefathers*.”

If the statements of the Romanian historians were true, and the people of Dačia were converted to Christianity in the 4th and 5th centuries, than they remained Christian throughout the time of the people migrations and they have continued to live in Transylvania without interruption since that time - then their churches, monasteries, chapels, abbeys and cemeteries should attest to their presence. Many authors has painstakingly examined the existence of cultic places and the dates of their foundation. They looked for those buildings whose existence is questionable but in vain; they found none. It is a well-known fact that, since man has existed, he has built cultic places in his place of settlement. Archeological research has not found any cultic places built by the Christianized Dacians from the 4th and 5th centuries. Nor can it be proven that, in the two centuries following the Magyar homecoming, from the 10th to the 12th century, the Romanians built Macedonic Orthodox churches in Transylvania. The first trace of Romanian cultic places cannot be found until the 13th and 14th centuries, when the Vlachs (or Romanians) migrated through the passes of the Carpathian Mountains from the central and southern Macedonian peninsula into Transylvania.

Around 870, Dacia Traiana and a part of Transylvania were placed under the authority of Boris of Bulgaria. If ‘*Daco-Romans*’ (*Rumanians*) had lived there, they would have had to yield to the brutal Bulgar force used against them and convert to Orthodox Christianity. However, we cannot find any contemporary traces of any Vlach church architecture, either in the wider Macedonian peninsula or in Transylvania. The historical sources do not mention the “*Romanized Dacians*” or the “*Vlachs/Romanians in Dacia*” until the 12th century, although numerous sources talk about the Vlach people in the Macedonian peninsula since the 10th century (976). Then all of a sudden in the annals of Macedonian peninsula history *Wallachia* appeared at the end of the 13th century, north of the Lower Danube. Accordingly, the first trace of Vlacho-Romanian cultic places cannot be found until the 13-14th centuries. First it was a semi-independent, later as an independent principality,

then it was united with Moldavia in 1859, and with the disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy after the World War I an opportunity occurred for the *Wallachians* (then already called "*Romanians*") to claim Hungarian Transylvania as a former "*Roman province*".<sup>27</sup>

What can be deduced by this absence, until 13th century of Christian cult places in Wallachia, is the continuity of Pagan worship among the remote pastoral communities of Vlachs, preserved until nowadays in isolated regions, as the Reka Region in western Macedonia. People in these remote villages still celebrate the woods spirits, animals and primordial gods, through strange rites and animistic rituals, of which the original meaning is lost long ago.

According to the genetic, linguistic and other evidences the conclusion is the following: Macedonic-speaking "*Lyachs/Vlachs*" are the minor Latinized remnants of the Ancient Macedonians, "*Tribalians/Dacians*" (or "*Getae*"), "*Germans*", "*Pannonians*", etc. For example, genealogical research showed that in the middle of the 15th century until the early 17th century, for five generations, ancestors of Rhedey Claudine, Countess of Transylvania, and of Prince Charles were *Wallachian* nobles, princes, and high dignitaries of the Bessarabian family.



Above: images from the LIFE magazine article about the minorities in Romania, of January 9, 1939<sup>28</sup>

Later, the word was somewhat corrupted, being changed by different users. For example, as already mentioned above, Italians in Polish are called "*Wlochy*", and in modern Hungarian-Magyar language Italians are "*Olasz*" and "*Oláh*" are Romanians, the Latinized Gaul and Germanic tribes

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<sup>27</sup> On the other hand, the Hungarians, who ruled Transylvania (the same plateau) all the way from the founding of their own state, except for the Turkish occupation, to 1918, like to claim that they were actually there first, and that the Romanians came in later. These competing political claims, which often have overtones of self-interested ethnic myth-making, make it very difficult for outsiders to evaluate the arguments -- anyone might be reasonably suspicious of what any of the Daco-Romanian or Hungarian sources say.

<sup>28</sup> see the front page at the end of this article.

“Franks” and “Alemani”, or Latinized *Veneti/Gaul/Illyrians* (other terms)<sup>29</sup>, namely wider Veneti-Etruscan population that was previously swallowed by the Roman empire. But even under Roman occupation all these different “Vlachs” retained their special status, because it was not possible to assimilate them completely, nor to defeat them entirely. Furthermore, in the 9th century, because unable to subjugate them by other means, the holy see in Vatican even allowed to these Macedonic populations their own National Liturgy (so-called *Illyrian Missal* is still preserved) in their own language, and even accepted and blessed the holy books in Glagolic/Cyrillic script.<sup>30</sup>

So called *Megleno-Aromanians* designate themselves with the Macedonian form *Vla'* (plural ‘*Vlaš'*’) in their own language in modern Vlach orthography used in the Republic of Macedonia, the only country where Vlach language has official status (it is one of the officially recognized minority languages). There’s also the term *Kutsovlach* (i.e. “*lame Vlach*”) which is sometimes used, but many find it utterly offensive.

This problem of derogatory identity-shift between the late antiquity and early medieval identities remains unsolved, and its importance is amplified by the fact that it still directly or indirectly impacting upon the self-perception and construction of modern pseudo-ethnic identities in the Macedonic and other regions of Europe. Somewhere deep inside these “*Lyachs/Vlachs*” are well aware of this incredibly false situation, but they pragmatically accept their dogmatic duality as virtue. In false hope to become “*Romans*” themselves, unwillingly but tacitly, they literally resurrected as “*Roman*” drones, cynically accepting the dictatorship and phony identity provided by the ruling empires. This ‘ethnic mimicry’ transformed their lives into endless theatre, total carnival, because they’re in the circumstances where the factual origin is ignored and banned long ago, and mere survival, deception and lie are in force. They despise themselves, unaware and blinded people, which without any limit accept the official version of the state they are in. They’re called with disgust “*treacherous latins*” or “*lyachmans*”, “*lyachi*” and “*tsintsari*”, which are all disrespectful terms given to them by the still unaffected portion of the original population.

Ottoman Turks conquest of the Macedonian peninsula caused ulterior demographic turmoil and triggered violent population movements. Migrations of the Vlachs turned some of once sedentary regions into semi-nomadic ones, while agriculture was substituted with animal husbandry. The change however, did not happen only in deserted regions where the Vlachs replaced previous peasant populations; in some regions, peasants themselves turned to animal husbandry and semi-nomadic ways of life, and revived patriarchal, clan, and tribal structures. It seems that this development was not limited only to Macedonians of the Balkans but influenced also other groups as well. It is important to note that this pattern does not contain any ethnic, but only cultural components - Macedonic and other groups of herdsmen had more common features among

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<sup>29</sup> “*Illyrians*” is in fact another pseudo-ethnic construction pulled-out-of-the-context which relies on a generalization and deception. It is compared to similar convenient models of “*Indo-European*”, “*Germanic*”, “*Slavic*”, “*Celtic*” and other pseudo-ethnic inventions of the conventional historiography.

<sup>30</sup> SS Cyril and Methodius alphabetization Macedonian mission in Great Moravia and Rome in the 9<sup>th</sup> century was officially recognized by the Roman Curia and finally proclaimed by the Pontifical legate in AD 863 on the Great Moravia court in Velegrad, with the bull\* “*Industriae tuae*”, which appointed (St.) Methodius from Macedonia as archbishop of Great Moravia and allowed him to serve the mass in Macedonic (i.e. ‘*Old Church Slavonic*’) language; moreover, French kings (Charles IX, Henri II, Louis XIII, Louis XIV) for centuries were sworn in by putting their hand on the bible written in Glagolic/Cyrilic script. This holy book known by the name ‘*Texte du Sacre*’ or ‘*L Evangile de Reims*’ is still preserved in the City Library of Reims, France.

themselves, than with agriculturalists of the same ethnic origin, transforming them into “Vlachs by occupation.” Hence, a number of smaller groups with a social status similar to or same as that of the Vlachs were soon absorbed under the Vlach name.

As far as the today ethnic identity of the Vlachs is concerned, nowadays Vlachs are classified in the group of peoples with a so-called ‘double identity’, where one can distinguish three levels: ethnic instinct, ethnic consciousness and national consciousness. Thus, according to the ethnic instinct they declare themselves Macedonians, by ethnic consciousness they are *Vlachs*, but according to the national consciousness they are divided along by the regional frontiers. Modern politically-biased scholarship generally remains content with this forged assessment of their identity. Throughout the centuries, Vlachs proved to be like chameleons, *les caméléons des Balkans* (I. Nicolau, 1993). In this way the ruling neoimperialists, monarchies and new nations can maintain the status-quo and continue their false premises, and the divided portions of once compact and cosmopolitan Macedonic population cannot claim back their historic glory and ravaged imperial heredity.

## From Latinization to Islamization - “Vlachs” becoming “Albanians” following the Ottoman invasion (the case of ‘Azem Vlasi’ )

In relation to the previously mentioned ‘Albanians’, the fact of their multiple identity shifting from their previous Latinization through more recent Islamization, it is as plain as the nose on one’s face. The same Latinized and other most poor strata of the Macedonic society that were so easily assimilated by Romans, looking for privileges and exemption from the taxes turned toward their new masters, the muslim Turks, this time by accepting the new religion. The blatant example is represented by the very name of the senior Kosovo ‘Albanian’ politician (an ex-terrorist sponsored by Clinton-American administration during the 1999 war in Kosovo and 2001 conflict in Macedonia) - Azem Vlasi (i.e. ‘Azem the Vlach’). His surname clearly discovers his previous autochthonous Vlach background, thus, previously Latinized autochthonous person, whose family in the past already switched once, during the centuries of Roman occupation, from the original Macedonic to the imposed Roman-Romeian identity. And then after they changed their new identity (and the religion) once again, when the second strong identity-shift occurred during the Ottoman Turks occupation.

Following the Ottoman conquest of the Macedonian peninsula, these now ex-Vlachs, still a largely nomadic and semi-nomadic population, made special arrangements with the Turkish conquerors. They even went further and accepted the muslim religion, and again, same as for the previous Roman conquerors, served on the side of the foreign invader as a colonising force within their own land and people, manning auxiliary military units such as *voyniks*, *martoloses*, and irregular *bashibozuks*, in newly conquered areas. In exchange, the Ottomans granted to these ex-Vlachs wide exemptions from the taxes and autonomies that made them significantly different from the ordinary subject population – *râyâ* (Turkish for ‘*plebs*’). In many cases, a decisive factor to determine who the “Vlachs” were, was the payment of the *filuri* tax. Population subjected to the payment of the *harâç* tax sometimes resorted to adoption of the Vlach identity in order to reduce the amount of ordinary *râyâ* taxes to the level of privileged Vlach dues – *rûsûm-i Eflakiye* (as was established in the canon of the Vlachs of Herzegovina of 1482-1485). The same was applied for those Vlachs and other Macedonic groups who became Muslims by religion, thus becoming (depending on the region) renamed into: “Albanians”, “Bosnians”, “Torbeši”, “Babuši”, “Gorani”, “Pomaci”, “Poturci”, etc.

During the course of time, with centralization and changes to state structure, the economic system and military organization occurring, many of the services that Vlachs used to provide for the Turks became superfluous. As a result, the 1520’s saw the beginning of Vlach renewed sedentarisation and a reduction of their privileges. By the end of the 16th century, these privileges resulted in the majority of Vlachs’ social standing being equalled to that of the *filuricis*, and later with ordinary *râyâ* peasants. The Vlach response to the lost privileges and pressure of the state was threefold: (1) rebellions; (2) migration to Turk-enemies territory; (3) acceptance of new realities and the loss of Vlach quality through further assimilation with the “ruling people” by means of islamization. That’s how the Vlachs became “Albanians” (e.g. Azem Vlasi). Thus, these new *vlachs*, i.e. “Albanians”, also became a “nation” in the 19<sup>th</sup> century upheaval of the new nations across the Macedonian

peninsula.<sup>31</sup>

Nevertheless, it seems that the greatest part of the Vlachs in the Macedonian peninsula remained Orthodox christian. Despite the relativization of the true ethnic origin, or the administrative definition of the Vlach status, their general significance should not be overlooked. Neither the importance of muslim Vlachs, or other, non-Macedonic elements should be underestimated.



Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France

<sup>31</sup> Accordingly, European “Albania” as a country was created by the western powers in 1912. Not to confuse with the original Caucasian Albania.

## Vlach/Romance languages: *Albanian, Aromanian, Catalan, Church-Latin, French, Italian, Portuguese, Romanian, Romansh, Spanish, etc.*

From a strictly linguistic and genealogic point of view, the Vlach cannot be called a language of its own, as it does not represent, at any level, an autonomous linguistic unity – in all its forms it is an archaic, dialectal, but still living Latinized variant of the Macedonic or other languages. Nevertheless, this perspective might change in respect to the definition of language, for it must not be forgotten that language is not (entirely) a linguistic phenomenon, but also a social and political one. The recent split of yet another branch of Macedonic languages, the *Serbo-Croatian*, in four “different” (?) languages – *Serbian, Croatian, Bosnian* and *Montenegrin* – even if the same Macedonic ‘*Shtokavian*’ subdialect is the basis for all of them, is a good example in this respect. And even if they are all mutually intelligible and by a purely linguistic criterion constitute a single language, they are, however, and for political reasons, recognized as distinct national standard languages. Since the original ‘standard language’ can act as a symbol of ‘independence’ (always helped by foreign intervention for manipulative divisions), many groups are paradoxically keen to keep “their language” separate from others who speak the very same language by changing it dialectically, despite the fact of being practically identical.

But, let's turn back to the very origin of the problem. If the Vlach idioms are Latinized variants and corrupted alteration of the Macedonic languages, then the following question arises: if, as we know, the Latin was only the administrative medium of the old Roman empire, and if there was nowhere any original “*Latin-speaking*” population to be found, then by whom and for what purpose was Latin invented and introduced in the first place? Especially if we know that it became a medium of communication among educated people long after the decline of the Roman empire, and remained as the liturgical language of the Roman Catholic church until the reforms of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965).

The only plausible solution to this puzzle is that the Romans, like so many other Macedonic stratagems, copied the Philip II of Macedon’ invention of the Esperanto “*Koine*” language [‘*Koi ne?*’ i.e. ‘*Who doesn’t* (speak it?)’ from plain Macedonian: “*koi*”- who, and “*ne*”- not].<sup>32</sup> Philip invented this trick, i.e. the ‘*Koine*’ language, in the 4th century BCE for practical reasons, in order to facilitate his rule over the Danaans (“*Greeks*”), Persians, Thracians, Thessalians, etc., by improving the mutual communication. ‘*Koine*’ (renamed by the 18-19th century romanticist philhellenes into “*Greek Koine*”) was the ‘lingua franca’ of the old Mediterranean world, simplified administrative idiom, meant to facilitate the communication between different-speaking groups of populations across the Macedonian empire. Romans simply adopted and utterly implied this old Macedonic stratagem in their benefit. They copied the existing *Koine* Macedonic script and letters, and added or graphically changed a few (like the *D, F, L*, etc.). But, on difference from the Macedonian empire, where *Koine* was voluntary choice of communication, Romans enforced their Latinization

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<sup>32</sup> A kind of artificial common language, coined from Macedonian phrase that describes a thing that “*Belongs to everyone*” - ‘(Na) *koi ne (e)?*’ i.e. “*Whose not! / To whom doesn’t (belongs)!*” meaning “*Who doesn’t (speak it)?*” - an exclamation through question, ‘out of question’, because everybody (thus ‘*Koi ne!*’ - *Who don’t!*) understand/speak it. See /*Koi*/ on Macedonian online dictionary: [http://recnik.off.net.mk/recnik/makedonski-angliski/\\*%D0%BA%D0%BE%D1%98](http://recnik.off.net.mk/recnik/makedonski-angliski/*%D0%BA%D0%BE%D1%98)

with fire and sword. Occupied territories and subjugated, depredated and enslaved populations experienced unprecedented predatory cruelty of Romans. Nothing alike the Macedonian cosmopolitanism, Romans built their empire on most repugnant slavery and ruthless military force, and the oppressed populations under their tyranny were regarded only as a raw material without any or with very limited human rights. Lets not forget - in this primitive slavery society the “national” sport of Romans was throwing alive people to the lions...

This violent Roman formula of centennial assimilation transformed numerous parts of indigenous Venetic-Gaul-Illyric-Dacian-Macedonic populations into modern day Vlachs: “*Albanians*”, “*Aromanians*”, “*Germans*”, “*Franks*”, “*Spaniards*”, “*Romanians*”, etc. A myriad of Latin-nick-named ethnic chameleons were created by double shift politics: more than being ‘*Latinized*’ by direct Roman oppression – they were also forced to use/speak this corrupted administrative Latin language or Latin-crippled Macedonic languages, i.e. *Romance* languages, which accordingly later became known as “*Albanian*”, “*French*”, “*Portuguese*”, “*Romanian*” and/or “*Aromanian*”, “*Romansh*”, “*Spanish*”, etc.<sup>33</sup>

Linguistics is a descriptive discipline, and in order to avoid any biases we shall refer to the Vlach vernaculars not as the “*Vlach languages*” nor as “*Latin language derivatives*”, but simply as “*Vlachian*” or “*Latinized variety of the Macedonic languages*”. Some scholars call it “*Balkan Romance*”, “*Ladino*”, etc. Daniel of Moschopolis (1802) called Albanian, Bulgarian, and Wallachian (Aromanian) “*Barbaric*” languages. The modern Vlach variety of these Latinized languages can be considered ‘*heritage language*’, following the widely accepted definition by Valdes (2000) that a heritage language is a language which is acquired by individuals raised in homes where the dominant (in this case the imposed Latin) language of the region is not spoken or not exclusively spoken. A heritage language is normally acquired before the imposed dominant language, but, it is not completely acquired because of the individual’s switch to that dominant language (Polinsky/ Kagan 2007).

The Vlach variety generally lacks a substantial record of previous documentation. Since we do not previously hear about ‘*Romance*’ or ‘*Vlach*’ speakers anywhere in the Macedonian peninsula, nor in any known mediaeval history, and ‘*Vlachian*’ as a written language at that point was completely inexistent, these people seem to just pop-up out of nowhere. Much the same is true of the Romance speakers north of the Danube, which had largely been *terra incognita* for the previous thousand years. Thus, anyone would wonder what had happened. Romance speech means Roman colonization, but, there’s lack of proofs of that too. What we know from Roman sources is that the province of *Dacia*, conquered and colonized by Trajan in AD 106, was abandoned around AD 271. This was, as we have seen, a very bad period for the Romans, and *Dacia* was a salient into territory mostly surrounded by increasingly active enemies. With the Roman withdrawal, the area drops out of recorded history for many centuries, and notice of Romance speakers there doesn't occur until something like the 14th century. Texts in the Vlach-Romanian language don't occur until the 16th century. Across the void of the Transylvanian plateau and Carpathian mountains, mediaeval

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<sup>33</sup> Take for example the French language – ‘*Franks*’ are latinized ‘*Germanic*’ tribes which adopted this corrupted Church-Latin administrative ‘*language*’ (even their name “*Franks*” is a Latin term, it comes from the Latin nickname for the battle axe these tribes used to fight with – the dreaded “*Franziska*” or “*Franca*” - a Latin for ‘*sincere*’).

So, they are triple-tricked: first they were renamed by the Romans into ‘*Germanic*’ tribes, then they were renamed again and divided from the rest of ‘*Germanic*’ nation as ‘*Franks*’, and at the end they were Latinized by adopting the corrupted Church-latin ‘*language*’.



historians only notice the passage of nomads - Germans (Goths and Gepids), Huns, Avars, Bulgars, Magyars, Petchenegs, Cumans, and, last but not least, the Mongols. In some sense, being out of the reach of the armies of Roman and Romeian empires, Wallachia played the role of a “Pirate island”, from where various brigands launched their raids throughout the Macedonian peninsula. The locations of Wallachia and Moldavia seem like virtual nomadic hideout-land during much of the Middle Ages, with no literate culture and no civil organization or political authority whatsoever, apart from the nomadic invasions.

The “no men’s land” status of the ex-Roman province of *Dačia* changed slowly with the Christianization. The early “Vlacho-Romanians” of Wallachia did not convert *en masse* or in any organized way to Christianity, or we would have heard about their bishops at the Ecumenical Councils. Nor did the “*Vlacho-Romanians*” acquired the religion from the Hungarians, for that would have been allied to the Church of Rome, not of Constantinople. Instead, the Romanian Church goes back to the conversion into Orthodox church rite, utterly confirming their linguistic and cultural relations with the southern regions of Macedonian peninsula. The appearance of “*Roumanian*”, written in Cyrillic alphabet, as well as the influence of the Old Church Macedonic (the liturgical language of the first Vulgaro-Wallachian Church) are all evidence of that. The instauration of official Vulgaro-Wallachian church, made by the emergent Vlach dynasty of Asens within the Episcopacy of Trnovo, also meant the rise of the regional episcopacy into Patriarchate. “*The Primate of all Vulgaria and Vlachia*” (lat. ‘*totius Bulgariae et Blachiae Primas*’) is what the newly appointed Patriarch of Trnovo called himself. The seat in Trnovo became the third independent Orthodox church, right after the Macedonic church (Ohrid Archiepiscopacy) and that of Russia, authorized from Constantinople. As Vulgaro-Wallachian kingdom declined and Serbia arose, another independent Patriarchate was established in 1346 at Peč (in Kosovo), for the coronation of Stefan Dušan as “*Macedonian Tsar of the: Bulgars, Serbs, Wallachians, Romeians, etc.*” In 1349 the Legal Code (“*Zakonik*”) of king Stefan Dušan was issued.<sup>34</sup>

In regard and as comparison to the appearance of “*Roumanian*” - even more mysterious is the appearance of the “*Albanian*” language. It is another *Out of place language* (a language by development), and 90 percent of the lexical fund of the Albanian language is comprised by the loan words taken from other languages. It is simply an admixture of many different sources. Out of 5140 studied words Romance (Latin) element is the most present, found in some 1420 borrowed words; Turkic in 1180 words; “*Koine*” within 840 words, and the rest 540 words are of the Macedonic provenance. Some 400 words are even found to be of African origin. Nonetheless, Macedonic language remained an important connection between Vlachian (i.e. *Roumanian*) and Albanian, as it has been explained by Noel Malcolm in the second chapter of his “*History of Kosovo*”: “*Linguists have long been aware that Albanian and Romanian have many features in common, in matters of structure, vocabulary and idiom, and that these must have arisen in two ways. First, the ‘substratum’ of Romanian (that is, the language spoken by the proto-Vlachs before their original language became Latinized) must have been similar to Macedonian; and secondly, there must have*

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<sup>34</sup> The “*Zakonik*” of king Dušan is mentioned here because in Paragraph 77 explicitly sentences fights between villages with 50 “*Perper*” (golden coin), and fights between groups of Vlachs or Albanians with 100 “*Perpers*”, thus clearly distinguishing them as nomads from settlements of villagers. It also prevents the meadows from overgrazing by allowing just one group of Vlach or Albanian shepherds at the most in a village.

been close contact between the early Vlach-speakers and today modern Albanians over a long period, involving a shared pastoral life (some key elements of the pastoral vocabulary in Albanian and Romanian originate from Macedonian). The substratum elements include both structural matters, such as the positioning of the definite article as a suffix on the end of the noun, and various elements of primitive Macedonic pre-Latin vocabulary, such as ‘copil’ or ‘kopil’ (i.e. ‘Kopile’ - a “bastard” in plain Macedonian<sup>35</sup>)." Accordingly, the validation of the above and the overall Macedonic origin of these Latinized idioms in Macedonian peninsula came again from the recent linguistic study of Jouko Lindstedt, where in *Summary* he concludes:

*"The most Balkanized verb system ... of this type can be considered to be somewhere around or south of the lake Ohrid (the very core of the Macedonian nation from most ancient times till today!), where the local Albanian, Romance and Macedonic dialects share all these features."*<sup>36</sup>

For many centuries *Vlachian* was only a spoken and not a written language. When it was committed to writing, as late as the 9<sup>th</sup> century - the Cyrillic alphabet was used, in line with the original Orthodox faith of the people. Later western imperialism managed to insert a new national consciousness in the principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia, where the language came to be called "*Romanian*." The name was at first itself influenced by Turkish pronunciation, as *Rumanian* or *Roumanian*, but along with the adoption of the Latin alphabet and an attempt to Latinize the language more, the name also was more Latinized. Several scattered enclaves of Vlach speakers survive in Albania, Greece, Macedonia and Serbia, though the use of the word "Vlach" for these is dying out, a process that is already concluded in Croatia and Dalmatia. The two greatest enclaves of Vlach-speakers in Albania and Greece are now said to speak *Aromanian*, while another enclave of speakers in Aegean Macedonia are said to speak *Megleno-Romanian*. And there is, of course, the pocket of *Istro-Romanian*, which is all the way to the northwest in *Istrian peninsula*, north of Dalmatia, a region previously heavily Vlachian.

Today Vlachs belong to four dialectal groups: *Țăranii*, *Ungurenii*, *Ungurenii-Munteni* and *Bufanii*. In spite of the lack of wider documentation about the Vlach variety, the standardization of the Vlach language is currently taking place, a process accompanied by intense debates, partly due to the fragmentation of the Vlach community, and partly to the delicate international political context. Thus, the Association "Gergina" from Negotin, in northern Serbia, issued a document titled 'Proposal 2011' in which we read the following definition: "*despite the fact that the language of the Vlachs is an idiom (dialect) which resulted from the Balkan Latinity, partly from Romanian and partly with influences from non-Romance languages, it is specific enough to be considered the mother tongue of the Vlachs.*" Also, two systems of writing were adopted: the Cyrillic and the Latin one, both based on phonetic principles. The Cyrillic-Vlach script comprises 34 letters and one syllable, *dz*. The Latin-Vlach script comprises 31 letters and four syllables: *dž*, *lj*, *nj* and *dz*; the additional vowels, apart from the universal ones (*a*, *e*, *i*, *o*, *u* - from the old Macedonic secret letter-prayer of the Bogomils), for both dialectal areas, are the long *a* - *ǎ* and long *i* - *î*.

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<sup>35</sup> constructed from the diminutive of Macedonic "*Kako*" - alike, and "*pile*" - a chick, small bird.

<sup>36</sup> Jouko Lindstedt "Is there a Balkan verb system?" 2002, page 10.

## Vlach traditions and customs

Archaic elements have been largely preserved in customs throughout the year; the people strove by magic rituals to secure a good yield of crop, a lot of cattle and health for the family. Vlach communities also kept vividly their beliefs into genies, forest spirits, fairies, etc. In spring the most important customs-date start with "Mladentsi" on March 22, when Vlachs make 40 "mladentsi" breads (which is a small ritual bread). During the carnival days customs ringers wear on themselves white trousers, *Šuba* (*shuba*, a roan), and *Klopotartsi* (bells), 'Kumaraks' decorated with colorful wraps hanging down to the ground. In addition to the bouncing their bells ring and drive away the winter.

Apart from all agrarian-magical customs performed throughout the year, there is also the cult of ancestors, which is related to the fertility cult. The cult of ancestors holds a prominent position in Vlach annual customs. With the departure of the deceased, the family did not sever its ties with him, but maintained them in various ways instead. It was thought that the deceased needed food and drink, heating, lights, clothes and other material goods in the world beyond, but also immaterial things such as songs and dancing, music and the like. The family would deliver these things in regular periods of time.

People thought of this world as transient, and of the other world as the eternal one. The mystical fear of death, the insufficiently comprehended and explicable phenomenon of life and death, as well as the respect of the dead, preserved customs and beliefs in the afterlife in a somewhat reduced and altered form.

Blood brotherhood is a kind of artificial kinship that used to be made in the past in order to resist spells, restore health or deliver somebody from evil.

Vlachs do not perform any work on certain religious holidays, so as to prevent thunder, hail and storms from causing damage; all holidays are celebrated with feasts and rejoicing.



Above: the cover page of LIFE magazine from Januray 9, 1939

Below are some excerpts in Polish from the 'History of Russia' ('Historia Państwa Rossyjskiego') from M. Karamzina, where the 'Łiachi' (Vlachs) are explicitly mentioned:

“O Izałanie mowi Nestor poyde s **Łiachi**; Wsewołod ze poyde protiwiu emu. Jeżeliby sam Król powtornie przychodził z Izaławem, w ten czas Kronikarz zapewne, iak i pierwey, wspomniałby o nim.”

“Daley w Kronike: sniaszasia wsi (Xiążeta Rossyiscy) u Czernsku (Czersku nad Wisłą?) i woiewasze worolizasia, tole wzemsze mirnych **Łiachow**, neze ratnych.”

“Kio Kron: Posłasza. posly k Izaławu Dawidowiczu, Jarosław Halicki Izbihniawa Swiatosław Olhowicz, Zirosława Iwankowie za. Rostisław Mstisławicz i Mstisław Izaławicz, Zirosława IEa- si He wic z; Jarosław Izaławicz Onujna, Wołodimer Andreiewicz, Hawriła Wasilewicza, Swiatosław Wsewołodowicz Kiianina, Korol (Węgierski) muża swoeho, iot **Łiachow** muž swoy.... ”

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